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11.
One evening, when coming back from school alone, I met Hans. It had snowed; the moon shone above the roofs, and a sort of vague restlessness spread over my heart at the sight of the crow. Coming to the door of our house, I was astonished to find it open; a few gleams were playing over the windows, like the reflections of a fire which was dying out. I went in; I called; no reply! But, figure to yourself my surprise when, by the reflection of the flame, I saw my uncle, his nose blue, his ears purple, stretched out at full length in his arm-chair, our neighbor's old gun between his legs, and his shoes loaded with snow. The poor man had been crow hunting.

"Uncle Zacharias," cried I, "are you asleep?"

He half opened his eyes, and fixing a drowsy look on me, "Toby," said he, "I have taken aim at him more than twenty times, and he always disappears like a shadow, at the very moment I am going to fire."

Having said these words, he fell back into a deep torpor. I shook him, but he did not stir. Then, seized with fear, I ran to find Dr. Hâselnoss. In raising the door-knocker, my heart beat with terrible force, and when the blow resounded through the vestibule, my knees bent under me. The street was deserted. Some flakes of snow fluttered around me; I shivered. At the third knock the doctor's window opened, and Hâselnoss's head, in a cotton cap, leaned out.

"Who is there?" said he, in a shrill voice.

"Monsieur Doctor, come quick to Master Zacharias; he is very sick."

"Ha!" said Hâselnoss, "time to put on a coat, and I come."

The window was closed. I waited yet a good quarter of an hour, looking at the deserted street, hearing the weathercocks creak on their rusty needles, and in the distance a farm-dog barking at the moon. At last a step was heard, and slowly, slowly, some one came down the staircase. A key was put in the lock, and Hâselnoss, enveloped in a gray great-coat, a small lantern in the form of a candlestick in his hand, appeared on the threshold.

"P-r-r-r!" said he, "how cold! I did well to wrap up."

"Yes," I replied, "I have been quaking for twenty minutes."

"I made haste, so as not to keep you waiting."

A moment later, we entered my uncle's room.

"Ha! good evening, Master Zacharias," said Doctor Hâselnoss, as tranquilly as possible, blowing out his lantern, "how do you do? It appears that we have a little cold in the head."

Uncle Zacharias seemed to awake at this voice.

"Monsieur Doctor," said he, "I will relate the thing to you from the very commencement."

"It is useless," said Hâselnoss, sitting down in front of him on an old trunk. "I know that better than you; I know the principle and the consequences, the cause and its effects; you detest Hans, and Hans detests you—you pursue him with a gun, and Hans comes and perches on your window, to mock at you. He! he! he! it's very simple, the crow doesn't love the song of the nightingale, and the nightingale cannot suffer the cry of the crow."

So spoke Hâselnoss, taking a pinch from his little snuff-box; then he crossed his legs, shook out the folds of his shirt-frill, and began to smile, fixing his small, malicious eyes on Master Zacharias.

My uncle was astonished.

"Listen," said Hâselnoss, "that ought not to surprise you; one sees such things every day. Sympathies and antipathies govern our poor world. You enter a tavern, a brewery, no matter where, you remark two players at a table, and without knowing them, you soon make wishes for one or the other. What reasons have you for preferring one to the other? None—he! he! he!—thereupon, savants build systems farther than one can see, instead of saying honestly: 'Here is a cat; here is a mouse. I make wishes for the mouse, because we belong to the same family; because before being Hâselnoss, doctor of medicine, I have been a rat, squirrel, or field-mouse, and that, consequently—'"

But he did not finish his phrase, for at that instant my uncle's cat happened to pass by him. The doctor seized him like an old wig, and made him disappear in his great pocket with the quickness of lightning. Uncle Zacharias and I looked at each other stupefied.

"What will you do with my cat?" said uncle, at last.

But Hâselnoss, instead of replying, smiled with a constrained air, and stammered:

"Master Zacharias, I am going to cure you."

"Give me back my cat first."

"If you oblige me to give up this cat," said Hâselnoss, "I abandon you to your sad fate; you shall not have another minute's rest, you can no longer write a note, and you will grow thin every day."

"But, in the name of heaven!" answered my uncle, "what has this poor animal done to you?"

"What has he done to me," replied the doctor, whose features contracted, "what has he done to me! Know that we have been at war since the origin of the centuries! Know that this cat resumes in himself the quintessence of a thistle which stifled me when I was a violet, of a holly which shaded me when I was a bush, of a pike which ate me when I was a carp, and of a sparrow-hawk which devoured me when I was a mouse."

I thought Hâselnoss was crazy; but Uncle Zacharias, shutting his eyes, answered after a long silence:

"I understand you, Doctor Hâselnoss, I understand you—you are not wrong!—cure me, and I give you my cat."

The doctor's eyes scintillated.

"Very well!" cried he; "now I will cure you."

He drew a knife from his case, and took a bit of wood from the hearth, which he split with dexterity. My uncle and I looked at him while he was doing it. After splitting his bit of wood, he began to hollow it. Then he separated a little strap of parchment, very thin, from his portfolio, and having adjusted it between the two blades of wood, he applied it against his lips, smiling.

My uncle's face brightened.

"Doctor Hâselnoss," he cried, "you are a rare man—a really superior man—a man—"

"I know it," interrupted Hâselnoss, "I know it. But put out the light, so that not a coal shall shine in the shadow!"

And while I was executing this order, he opened the window wide. The night was freezing cold. Above the roofs the moon appeared calm and limpid. The dazzling brightness of the snow, and the obscurity of the room, formed a strange contrast. I saw the shadow of my uncle, and that of Hâselnoss, cut out against the front of the window; a thousand confused impressions agitated me at once. Uncle Zacharias sneezed; Hâselnoss extended his hand with impatience to command him to be quiet; then the silence became solemn.

Suddenly a sharp whistling traversed space. "Pie-wite! pie-wite!" After this cry, all became still once more. I heard my heart galloping. At the end of a minute, the same whistling was heard: "Pie-wite! pie-wite!" I perceived, then, that it was the doctor who produced it with his bird-call. Remark- ing this gave me a little courage, and I paid attention to the least circumstance which was passing around me.

Uncle Zacharias, half-stooping, looked at the moon. Hâselnoss kept motionless, one hand on the window, and in the other the whistle.

So passed two or three minutes; then, all at once, a bird's flight cleft the air.

"Oh!" murmured my uncle,

"Hush!" said Hâselnoss, and the "pie-wite" was repeated several times with strange and precipitate modulations. Twice the bird grazed the window in his rapid, restless flight. Uncle Zacharias made a movement to take his gun, but Hâselnoss seized him by the wrist, murmuring, "Are you crazy?" Then my uncle was quiet, and the doctor redoubled his whistlings with so much art, imitating the cry of the speckled magpie when taken in the net, that Hans, whirling to the right and left, ended by entering our room, drawn, doubtless, by a singular curiosity which troubled his brain. I heard his two feet fall heavily on the floor. Uncle Zacharias shouted, and darted on the bird, who escaped from his hands.

"Clumsy!" cried Hâselnoss, shutting the window.

It was time; Hans was hovering about the beams in the ceiling. After making five or six tours, he knocked himself against a pane with so much force, that, stunned, he slid the whole length of the window, trying to fasten his claws in the cross-pieces. Hâselnoss lit the candle quickly, and then I saw poor Hans between my uncle's hands, who was squeezing him by the neck with a frantic enthusiasm, saying:

"Ha! ha! ha! I've got you, I've got you!"

Hâselnoss accompanied him with bursts of laughter: "He! he! he! are you content, Master Zacharias, are you content?"

I never saw a more frightful scene. My uncle's face was crimson. The poor crow stretched out his claws, beat his wings like a great night-butterfly, and the death-shiver ruffled his feathers.

This sight horrified me so, that I ran to hide myself at the end of the room.

The first moment of indignation past, Uncle Zacharias became himself again. "Toby," he cried, "the devil has paid his accounts; I pardon him. Hold this Hans before my eyes. Ah! I feel myself live once more! Now, silence! Listen!"

And Master Zacharias, with an inspired face, sat down gravely to the harpsichord. I was in front of him, and I held the crow by the beak. Behind, Hâselnoss held up the candle, and a more *bizarre* picture was never seen than these three figures, Hans, Uncle Zacharias, and Hâselnoss, under the high and worm-eaten beams of the ceiling. I can see them now, lighted by the trembling light, as well as our old furniture, whose shadows vacillated against the decrepit wall. At the first chords, my uncle seemed to be transformed; his large blue eyes sparkled with enthusiasm; he was not playing before us, but in a cathedral, before an immense assembly—for God himself!

What a sublime chant! turn by turn sombre, pathetic, heart-rending, and resigned; then suddenly, in the midst of sobs, hope displayed its wings of gold and azure. Oh, heaven! how is it possible to conceive such great things!

It was a requiem, and for an hour inspiration did not abandon Uncle Zacharias for a single second.

Hâselnoss laughed no more. Insensibly his bantering face had taken on an undefinable expression. I thought he was much affected; but soon I saw him make nervous movements, tighten his fist, and I perceived that something was struggling in the skirts of his coat.

When my uncle, exhausted by so many emotions, leaned his forehead on the edge of the harpsichord, the doctor drew from his pocket the cat, which he had strangled.

"He! he! he!" said he; "good evening, Master Zacharias; good evening. We each have our game, he! he! he! You've made a requiem for the crow Hans; now you must make a hallelujah for your cat. Good evening!"

My uncle was so faint, that he contented himself with saluting the doctor with a movement of his head, and signed to me to conduct him to the door.

Now, this same night died the Grand Duke, Yéripeter, second of the name; and as Hâselnoss crossed the street, I heard the cathedral bells set a-going slowly. Entering the room again, I saw Uncle Zacharias standing up.

"Toby," said he to me, with a grave voice, "go to bed, my child, go to bed; I am restored; I must write all that to-night, for fear of forgetting it."

I hastened to obey him, and I never slept better. The next day, toward nine o'clock, I was awakened by a great tumult. The whole city was out; they talked of nothing but the death of the Grand Duke.

Master Zacharias was called to the castle. They ordered from him the requiem of Yéripeter II., a work which was finally worth the place of chapel-master to him, which he had long been ambitious for. This requiem was no other than that of Hans. So Uncle Zacharias became a great personage, since he had a thousand thalers a year to spend, and often said, in my ear:

"Ha, nephew, if they knew that I composed my famous requiem for the crow, we might still be playing on the clarionet at the village fêtes. Ha! ha! ha!" and my uncle's big paunch shook.

So go things in this world.

—Eckmann-Chatrian.

AN UNCOLLECTED SONNET OF EDGAR A. POE.

SILENCE.

THERE is a silence where hath been no sound,
There is a silence where no sound may be,
In the cold grave—under the deep, deep sea,
Or in wide desert where no life is found,
Which hath been mute and still must sleep profound;
No voice is hushed—no life treads silently,
But clouds and cloudy shadows wander free,
That never spoke—over the idle ground;
But in green ruins, in the desolate walls
Of antique palaces, where Man hath been,
Though the dun fox, or wild hyena, calls,
And owls, that flit continually between,
Shriek to the echo, and the low winds moan,
There the true Silence is, self-conscious and alone.